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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7657
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RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 3534
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SUBJECT: JORDAN,S CABINET PROPOSES MANDATORY MILITARY
SERVICE

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11. (U) The cabinet agreed March 5 to seek parliamentary approval of a bill reviving conscription. The proposal would require both men and women to participate in three months of military training -- men at army camps and women at universities. Prime Minister Marouf Al Bakhit said in a speech March 3 that the purpose of this legislation was to "instill the concepts of discipline and good citizenship." As presently drafted, the legislation would require Jordanians born in 1989 to begin training this year. However, Parliament has not yet begun to debate the bill.

12. (SBU) Comment: Parliament will probably wind up its session at the end of March; it is unlikely to debate this bill unless the government makes a determined push for it. The cabinet action is the result of the King's desire to use conscription to promote good citizenship among youth and break down class and geographic barriers in society.

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